Field notes

After rescheduling the interview once, we set a week before that the interview would happen on Monday, April 22nd, at Bethany Baptist Church, in Newark, around 11 AM. I arrived at 10:40 AM and there she was, sitting at one of those long tables, alongside many of other Newark seniors, as usual. Robin recognized me and went down to call her to come to me. She came and, with her big smile, said "yes! I remember you! How are you, my dear?" She was wearing a shirt portraying the Third Family Reunion in 2017, promoted by Ras Baraka (see picture).

We talked for a while, and I presented her the Release Form, which she replied "oh yes, I've seen it before". She didn't even read it, she got the pen and signed it. After a couple of minutes we started the interview. As a narrator, she described in great detail the places that were meaningful to her and her community, and her feelings and experiences in them. She knew Newark very well, its streets, communities, businesses, and modes of transportation. And most of all, she is very conscious of the city's history of segregation and its effects on people's lives.

My biggest challenges were, first, that the place was very noisy, coupled with her soft talking style, made it hard to understand the points she was raising. Second, the fact that I don't know Newark's and New Jersey's geography, and famous businesses from the past, for example. She noticed that, and, at a certain point, she chose not to get into much detail because it would make the interview more complicated and we could end up losing track of time and/or missing the main points.

After the interview was done, I turned the recorder off, however, she briefly talked about something that also needs to be registered. She mentioned that Newark was very well known for leather, manufacturing, and brewery. According to her, there were about 10 breweries in the city and that was why Newark had one of the best waters at that time, so the city could provide them their tanks with the best water. And, as we know, things have changed a lot after they were gone.

I told her "they are trying to bring the city up again" to see what would be her take on that. And she replied, with a doubtful tone, "yeah… but in a different way". I thanked her again and promised to contact her again for possible follow up questions.

Interview

2019-04-22_Joyce Reed 1_Thayane Bretas_DCOHC

Label

Red – words the interviewer did not fully comprehend/does not know the spelling.

Interview Transcription

Ok, so I started. My name is Thayane and I am here to interview Ms. Joyce Reed. We are at Bethany Baptist Church on Market St. in Newark. Today is April 22nd, 2019 and we are going to discuss about Ms. Reed's overall life experience in Newark as a black woman. Ms. Reed, thank you so much for accepting to participate in this project. This will be really valuable to researchers and historians in the future who will be interested in life stories of people from Newark. You will have a chance to review this recording because I will send it to you, and you can choose not to answer any question you don't feel comfortable answering it, you can ask to take a break, you can ask to finish the session whenever you want to. I want you to feel safe and comfortable to tell me whatever you want to and if there is anything you say that you don't want to use, or others to know, we can always go back and take it out.

FAMILY HISTORY

So I am really interested to know your story and your family story here in Newark. And how did your father arrive in New Jersey?

1:25 – Ok, I will start with my grandmother. We are more women than men in our family, unfortunately. Well, I guess a typical black man is not (*). My grandmother was originally from North Carolina. She came here at an early age. I don't know exactly, but she was an adult. As many things happen in family, from what I've heard, it's called "family stories and family lies" so you see… [laugh] Yes, we all have that. And I think my grandmother and two of her sisters left when their mother died. I've never gotten their full story, because once again older people are not like younger people, they don't tell about life with all… It's forbidden to speak off, you just didn't… you know. She was here… I've never met all of her sisters because some came, whatever the dispute was, it sort of separated them, so to speak. So I never got… most black people have true southern root. I didn't have because my grandmother, I would call her selfish, because we didn't know at that time. We shouldn't get involved with adult situation, children should not get caught up in the situation. (*) we didn't have that privilege, we didn't know. As you get older then you look back and say "oh I didn't know this, I didn't know that, you can't speak of this because you don't know". 2:56 – So my grandmother, I don't know where, when she met my grandfather, but he was from Boston. He certainly was interesting because back then he had to come with the railroad with his family. He was… different. I was young, and I don't know what he did, but at that age, when I always look back, he was always in a white shirt and a suit, which is unusual, because back then it was, you know, more physical labor. And when he got angry (*), oh that was the worst (*) [laugh]. It was like "what the hell is that?!" [laugh]. He was… I'm gonna focus on him a little bit more. He was very frugal, because we don't realize

when we are young, but men have a responsibility, some things we think he should just do and you don't know what it takes. He and my grandmother were separated I guess from the time I was born but he came to stay with my mother for… I've never seen (*), things like a round ball, you put the sock in and men socks, we would threw them away, but he would sit and do the socks and put them together.

He was your mom's father…

Yes. We, once again, not knowing the value of things, he had an old sewing machine. And he used to make things for my mother! My mother had very short hair, but he would put a.. some things that men just didn't do. He would do because it was cost-efficient. It is not a very nice thing to say but I guess my mother died because of so many restrictions he put on in food, and my mother would say "if I ever grow…" oh and they had covers because they didn't have refrigerators back then, I wasn't even born. But he used to put like not the food to see if anybody (*) to see what was gone. They didn't have a refrigerator and they had things that should be preserved such as butter and stuff. So I remember growing up and she would not eat margarine. I've never knew the difference between butter and margarine but she could look at it (*). But he wasn't around as much. 5:46 – He married later, and my grandmother, she married later. My step-grandfather, I liked him. He was just so real. He used to tell me about current events, "do this, do that" and he would talk. He used to say "you have to get a newspaper, and you have to listen every morning, he had a newspaper. We've never lived together, but I spent a lot of time with my grandmother. My mother and I we lived together. I guess when being older, sit and listen to them, talk to them. 6:25 – So my mother, she was one of five, it was four girls and one boy. 6:35 – My aunt (*), she was a saint. She lived in Roselle, back then Roselle was rural. It didn't have the houses and whatever (*). She had her son late so we didn't grew up with her son. My daughter and her son grew up together. But me and my cousins, Bobby, Danny, David and my cousin (*), Roselle was our down south [laugh] So funny! Down south because it was still rural, they had their (*) that ran behind her house and we didn't know then, now we know, they could've had, what you call, water flood and it could have rushed their house. (*) The water come from somewhere else (*), it was lucky that that never happened. So we went to see her, that was our summer vacation. She came to visit us, she didn't have any children at that point, she came when it was Christmas, she had everything… oh my god, she even gave us a dollar! That was a lot of money when you think of 80, 70 years ago! And she had dresses for the girls and (*) for the boys. And she would [hand movement and sounds that indicate grubbing/pinching a child's cheeks]. She was so happy but at the same time when we (*) [laugh]. So that was her and I think she finally had a son very late in life. And when you don't have children you can find, fought how people really (*). And he was right, cause she had it late. He would have a credit card and we would go to the restaurant and we would go pick stuff we wanted in lunch [laugh]. (*) We were happy with her. 8:45 – The other aunts and uncle, being the man in the house, I don't think he was. He had his own family but he didn't really protect his sisters… As adults, when you marry you don't have to, but we lived in the same apartment building for so many years. He lived on one floor, my mother and I lived in another, and they lived with the three boys – Bobby, Danny and David. They are like… I call them my brother-cousin because we lived in the same environment for so many years together".

It was a multi-family house?

9:15 - No, it was an apartment building. Six units, one in each floor. They lived on one floor we lived on another. And it was like family, the same people lived there forever, almost so. So it was good. Whenever they went out we would be all, me, Bobby, Danny, David, stay together. It really motivates you. And, unfortunately, one time when they were out my cousin Danny, I was there with them when he had his first seizure. He died about three years ago, but when the mother died Bobby felt responsible for his brother. They were good. They became (*) so we lost (*). Only in death was the time that we would come around. They had their own particular lifestyle(*). And each time we would say "Oh we are gonna keep in touch". We see each other now and we are not gonna see each other in the next… don't feel obliged to say that. So there are things that ties family together and things that separate it, you know? 10:44 – My cousin, her name was Clarissa, we called her Clari. She had three kids. The oldest one, we grew up together. She waited 17 years later for the other two. So we weren't too much close because there was too much space in between us. She had a good sense of humor, we were very very close, and as we get older you create your own friends, your work environment.

COMMUNITY

11:20 – I am unique because I'm the only child. So a lot of things 'we didn't have anything to eat!' 'we had a really hard time!' I didn't know about that, I didn't have that. Fortunately, I can't relate to certain things because it wasn't something I knew or if it happened they [my parents] did very well to conceal it. You never know what mother and father does to give what you have on the table. You just see it and "oh God sent me that!" [laugh]. And then when you get older you start to look back, and you say 'maybe that's why such and such happened', because you have to experience it to realize what your parents had gone through and the sacrifices they made, and being so selfish… today people feel entitled. Back in those days people didn't feel that way, because most people had at least 7 in their families, 7 or more, some had 13, 14 kids, you know. So there was a difference in how they were (*), and what they expected. And there was one girl "oh come upstairs to eat dinner! Come upstairs with me!" so I went upstairs and she had this can of green peas, she ate the rest and she was full! I would've starved! She ate, it was not even beans, this was just green peas you have on the side. That stayed in my mind. Some things you look at and you say 'oh my god'". But in school, I didn't move around, I was very fortunate. A lot of people they move here and there, we were stable.

NEWARK AND THE HILL

13:15 – There were parts of Newark that they called the Hill. That's because it's actually on the hill. Downtown (*) and then there was the Hill. And it is called the Third Ward which now has changed to Central, which is a large portion, And that used to be a Jewish community. As Jews moved forward, they left the place and we moved in. A lot of them were called *water flats* that they didn't have tub or they had water and heater, bathroom shared. But a lot of people, a lot younger than me, (*) Jewish people that were lived in the same condition back in the day. So to make sure that they would bathe properly, they had to (*)".

14:30 – Have you seen JFK swimming pool?

No.

Ok, because the kids from East Ward used to come up there for (*). It was an Olympic size pool. For years people did not know about the pool.

So people didn't know about it. But Jewish people were leaving the area…

15:00 – "They (*), they could rest... I guess it's (*) move on and move on and move on. The South Ward, those were of the affluent, for real. They lived in the South Ward of Newark, which is down by Weequahic. Most of the apartment buildings even had maid services". "Like around Portuguese, but now they moved to West Orange, some were left behind as not everybody had the same opportunities".

You lived in the Hill, but for how long?

15:40 – Oh, I think forever! I was in Hillside for while my daughter and I bought a house together. (*). I was the only child and I had just one child too. (*). Now I live in High Park Garden which is a gated community, so more or less I've always lived on the Hill.

You live now in High Park?

Uhum, High Park Garden. That's on the Hill community as well. Even the South Ward really is up on the Hill.

16:30 – In this area that you lived, how did your parents could get the place? Was it easy for them? Was it difficult?

I have no idea because I told you I've never been much around my grandfather anyway so when they were there. I lived on the same street, first further down the street. That was a private home, but then they sold, that was the 47 Hillside, then I moved to number 5 Hillside". In 47, that's another thing too, the family called the Moors, they had 13 kids. Let me tell you about that family. They were the most lovely family you've ever wanted. The mother wasn't in the house much, the house was always a mess. They had a lot of children and they had chores to keep the house clean, but Ms. Moors (*). She called the father daddy and he called her mother. So there were never names. They've never lived in public housing, they always lived in private homes. Mr. Moors he was fortunate. He worked in Edgewater in companies. Most places they hire blacks for 90 days and later on they fire them so they can't join the union. But he, as a matter of fact, (*) he had a picture with all his kids in the wood.

How did the neighborhood change over time? Did you feel any…

19:00 – When I was younger everybody knew everyone, you had to be respectful and mindful because somebody could see and come back saying that you were not acting properly. So today kids are used to getting away with anything. No no no no. Back then neighbors could reprimand you in any way they deemed necessary. It was fine. Now, parents are 'what did you say to my kid?' so you are afraid to say anything to anyone, you know? But with us, we were like a family in that area, in that community. We would always play outside, the girls would play outside, play street games which was fun. Kids could be out until the streetlights. Moms would say 'be home

and stay in the block'. We couldn't go cross town either. We knew our boundaries, so to speak. That was another thing too though. It was territorial. If you cross what's (*) St. that was a different school district, you didn't date the boys and the boys couldn't come to you on that side, and it would be like East-West side story [laugh]. '(…) You've got problems 'cause you're dating the boys from our side of the town!" [laugh]. Because, first of all, what were you doing on that side of the town? How did you meet? So that was funny. But you tried to stay within. But because I didn't either. Oh, we had intermural sports. Like you lived here, I lived here, all schools of Newark competed in sports, but it was tracked and schools were competing against each other. Once again, boundaries. Newark was very a prejudice city, for real.

Did you feel that?

When you are young you don't realize it. Later, you look back and you think about it. Any community is called the ghetto really, and each one stay within their ghetto, Italian, whatever. It is what it is. Down where it is called the Ironbound now, those were the poor Italians, because you had the (*) houses around there together.

Factories…

"Yes, it was very industrial. That's a very unhealthy community. Because they don't tell you what was there. They just built houses on top of contaminated land.

21:50 - And it's the same with Central High School, that shouldn't be there. That was *West* General Electric, all that Tunkson and stuff. They built a whole high school up on that thing. Once again, politics. They closed Central High School, that was predominantly black school, they shut it down because Rutgers is there, NJIT is there, and they didn't want their kids to go to the same school, and they put them on the Hill. Ok? So when they got them on school, these kids would not have to mix. So what they did? They took it over".

You mentioned ghetto, which one was yours?

22:50 – We were on the Hill. The Hill was predominantly, mostly blacks were on the Hill, after the Jews migrated. Because when I was a kid, Jews people were still living around, because we used to have (*), turning the lights on and off, because after 6 o'clock or before they couldn't do electricity so the things they couldn't do and they would ask us kids to turn things on. We had lots of synagogues. As a matter of fact, if you go to JCC, Jewish Community Center, they have a whole area there showing all the different synagogues that they still sponsor and try to help, even though they don't use them, but, still, is a part of their culture.

So they continue there in the Hill…

One they couldn't keep because it was just too big, they had everything, their own swimming pool, gymnasium, right on the Hill".

FUN IN NEWARK

Where did you used to go for fun when you were not studying or working?

24:20 – “As a kid you just basically played out on the street, street games. I used to go Queen of Angels on Academy St, that was a Catholic but they had CYO. We would walk over there. (*) That’s when we were young. Then we used to have Why that we used to go too. That was on Court St. That was also on the Hill, so to speak, you know.

Mostly black as well people going...

Yeah, only! Only! What else… oh, downtown Newark. That’s very interesting. It was also segregated. We had major department stores. Haynes, Pretzkees, Bamberger’s, Polbox. Haynes. (*) That’s still down there, it’s called Haynes Building now where they have Whole Foods, they did store the (*), including Bamberger’s the Haynes was the last one to give us credit, they didn’t wanna give us credit to get a credit card. But they had a lot of boutiques downtown. So a lot of times for you to establish your credit… Canadian, that was a chain store for real, Canadian Club photographers, back then. They had one on Broad St, they were very liberal with us”.

With the black community…

“Uhum. If you just wanted a credit card you had to travel to other places to establish your credit. Even today, banks, a lot of things they don’t sponsor! As a foreigner people don’t realize that there are certain things they are given privilege to because they are foreigners. If you’re black (*)”.

26:32 - “So Bamberger’s they had the greatest Christmas celebrations. I think they had 7 or 8 floors. They had (*) costumes, decorations. (*). They had Santa Claus upstairs. They had gifts for everyone, divided by gender and age. It was absolute wonderland, I’m serious. To this day I would never ever forget the pleasure of going in that store. It just took me to a magic land, for real. (*) I think they didn’t make much progress because they spent so much money on decorating that it was unbelievable. Christmas, they had a parade, Thanksgiving Day Parade. Weequahic Park, they used to go all the way down Broad St, all way to the store. The parade was at night, they put the lights out because of Christmas, they didn’t use street lights, they had so much decoration hanging from Bamberger’s all the way to Market St, Broad St. It was a just winter wonderland. Every store had… maybe they had an agreement with the city. It was just like New York (*). So we went to that and it was absolutely gorgeous.”.

What period of time was this?

It had to be the 1940s. I didn’t know what time, I did have it written down. I think they stopped in 1959, I have It figured out somewhere in my notes with me, but it was in the late 1950s, maybe 1959 when they stopped. But it was wonderful. Downtown Bamberger’s was in the corner of Halsey and it went this way down to Washington St. The big buildings you see in Washington and Market were all Bamberger’s. They had their own garage”. “Newark as big as it was never really had public parking lot. Elizabeth and other ones had it, we didn’t have it. I guess there was just so many streets that you could park. On the other side, Haynes had their own. But you had the streets you can park. Downstairs in Bamberger’s they had (*) they had groceries store down, (*) downstairs, they made foundations, and we didn’t have to buy them. They measured you and did it for you”. Very very nice. Halsey St was absolutely amazing.

Singers sewing machine. You bought a machine and you got lessons for free. Using their machines, you brought your own fabric. (*). Across the street there were shoe stores. Oh God. They had the best shoe stores ever. Bamberger's, God bless them. I broke my shoes, I walked like a cowboy on the heels [laugh] But they would take things back! Now they don't want to know anything! 'Ok, bring me the shoes, I'll get you another pair' that was fine'". I learned to walk in heels thanks to Bamberger's. Now they have other stores, like I said, top main stores. Upstairs on the other side, we have a place for (*), they had fabric and (*). You could go there, they put zippers for you. They classes on how to do crochet, (*), wonderful. Right there you just had a whole another world. 32:10 - "Downtown Newark used to have 10 movie theaters [laugh]. They even had a burlesque, on the corner. A lot of people don't know about the burlesque. There was a lot of entertainment. Big bands came down here. (*) You had upstairs and downstairs, so the kids would play (*). And the kids would go in to see the band. So at one point the lights would go off "all the kids, get out!" [laugh] they couldn't catch the kids but would say "go to school, go to school!" [laugh]. It was just a fun place. (*) There was another one.. the Little… well, that was not… called the Little Theater, they just recently closed.

It is still there! Just the façade.

Yes! I think about 7, 8 years ago, but that was… mostly men went to that [laugh]. Then you had the (*), you had the (*). In (*), you had the movies in the movies upstairs. And further down you had the Camule further down. And each district area had their own movie theater. The Hill the movie was the National. Anybody who is about my age know about the National Theater.

And this was during the 1940s, 1950s, right…

Yeah, 1950s, 1960s.

CHANGES IN NEWARK

When did you start seeing real changes happening?

35:00 – "What happened after the WWII, one would want something better and a lot of people were living under certain conditions that they found a calling to go back, so they decided to migrate. As a result, there were so many people coming you couldn't control them and you couldn't house them. So then comes the projects, the public housing. They didn't exist for us, but now you take a bunch of people that used to have a house with a backyard, you had your own space, so you take these people and put them on top of each other in these huge buildings. They don't know how to receive that. They couldn't think beyond the fact 'oh they are messy!'. No, they were messy, they were out of their element. They thought they could find something better, now they were trapped. Now where do you go, what do you do? What they did also, when the kids came from the south of the United States, they automatically were put one year down. They came from North Carolina, South Carolina, they [the government] automatically demoted them, one year. Why? Because the black teachers weren't teaching them? They didn't test them to see if they… they just assumed, 'they were coming from the South, they don't know stuff'. As parents, I guess maybe people didn't use to think about it this much. But 'why are you doing this? Did you test my child?' They were a lot smarter in many ways, first of all, they knew their

culture. Up here, they were not gonna teach you your culture. You really and your roots. The Jewish kids I went to Weequahic High School with, after school they went to school to learn about Judaism. So no matter what was thought or said, they had to learn from their own. That's what is about secret alliances families don't always tell you, so many things they fail to tell you that they (*) the truth.

SCHOOL AND JEWISH COMMUNITY

38:10 – **That was a question I wanted to ask you. How mixed your school and college went to?**

"Schools were from your own district so it's like in New York before, if you live here you go to this school, if you live there, you go to that school. There wasn't any question of mixing because it was already separated, segregated. Now High school, this is where I find the Jews. I got special permission to go to Weequahic, which is in South Ward, all the Jews were still there. I was one of seven blacks in high school.

How was it?

"It was ok but at the same time it wasn't my culture. You were there but it was Jewish culture. I'm not Jewish! Now being there was great because they had the best of everything. In the winter the school was almost deserted because the teachers were in Florida for 2 or 3 months. And still, nothing was said. Ok? Because the parents were in Florida, or certain times they'd go to back then Belmore. They've changed but that all belonged to Jewish communities. And they were smart because they were segregated against but they had enough sense to get their own, they segregated against everybody else [laugh]. It is what it is. Catstills, they had that for years, oh my god, they had palatials. And Florida, the Jews owned that. And then other people came in and moved them out. But they had other places they wanted to go. (*).

SERVICE

39:58 - I have a daughter, I was like 18, 17? So I dropped out of school. So I got GD (*) Institute and I think I am going (*). I went into service. (*)I was trying to join the Airforce but then I found they were getting paid just once a month, so I joined the Navy because they [laugh] they paid twice in a month [laugh]. Then they called on waves. And, it was nice. And like I said before with the other girl, I felt guilty when "oh you went into service? My goodness!" I didn't get anything because they sent me to Terminal (*) which was a part of Long Beach, I guess it was in transition from something into the other. I was never embarrassed, we were in offices coordinates, and we had our own room, we had furniture, dresser, bed, we didn't cook, the guys cooked for us, we've never had (*) duty. So whenever I talk about this "have you ever felt like you there was something you had to do…" All they did was treat the women like men, just the other day I was with (*) which is like my other daughter, and she said "Remember what they did with the gas? And you had to survive? Vomiting?" I said [noise indicating a negative response]. They just didn't treat us that way. Honestly true. They may have changed through the years. (*) "Boot camp was hard, because you had to learn how to get around, wake up early in the morning, and they were teaching us when one person does wrong then all get punished. So you

learn to work as a group. You don't work against each other. That was something they taught us. (*) It was so cold, my skin cracked. (*). The coldest place I've ever been. I finished bootcamp (*)

How old were you?

I was 18. And I stayed there for 2 years.

JOB

43:00 – That's another thing about the workforce. I was always fortunate, I could get a job. And so much so that that it was my downfall because I was never satisfied. Once I learned it then I got bored, than my situation was that I had to stay somewhere. God had bless you to give you a good job, you know, it's one of those things when it comes easy you don't appreciate it enough. I worked at a telephone company, 540 Broad St., most the people that were black were telephone operators.

If you were black, you would be…

Most of them were operate telephone number. They want you 5 (*). But I was all over the place. (*). God had blessed me, you know what I mean?

Were you realizing that for your friends or people in your community was harder to get jobs than for you?

I knew that because I would hear "you are lucky" and I would say "what?". Because it just happened. I could always get a job.

CHALLENGES OF LIVING IN NEWARK

What to you were the biggest challenges of living in Newark?

44:30 – I think the transition when we had the Migration of other people coming in, it wasn't anymore a family, you know? Because you didn't know this person, you didn't know that person. You were never afraid, you weren't concerned about someone doing something to you. Then came different people with different attitudes, and different cultures.

When did it happen?

Well, it was gradual, but I would say in the early 1950s. And then it was when they said 'ok, what are we gonna do with all this black people?' "oh, we're gonna pile them on top of each other". When you're rich, it's a high rise. When you're poor, it's the projects. So it has a lot to do with your mindset because we could live well here too, but like I said, most of those people that came from the South they used to be in houses. "But now where do I go? I spent all of my money to get here, I thought it was the land of milk and honey, and all I got is sower and pickles". So the attitudes tended to change.

46:00 - Then the projects, the buildings. The majority went to the white, those ones were low rise, they had walk in, they had a little this. And they had loans. They had 3 stores, 4 stores. We would say "What the heck, we didn't even know! They were projects!" Because they were given

to the whites! So that was another situation. And they were built in a different area. They took a lot away from people, you know. I never lived in housing, but I have family members that did. You cluster together like animals, really. And a lot of the parents, believe me, (*) first it was nice, but then different people were mixed together, with different thoughts, different thought patterns and lifestyles. So after a while, someone would get in and mess with you. There were a lot of good people! But a lot that couldn't barely survive. And (*) a lot of the parents wouldn't allow their kids to go out. You would be surprised with the number of families that had kids at home that would just play with each other. And I didn't know that for years! (*) and you can't let your kid out of the house.

And in the apartment, which is worse if you can't go outside, you don't have a garden or anything…

Yeah, it was hard. So then came the riots and that was a mess.

How was it?

48:10 It was bad. It was bad. I didn't go out, I kept my daughter in the house, we just waited, I said 'we're not gonna do that'. What happened then, most of the stores like I told you just moved, the people moved. They took 78 built that right through the middle of the South Ward, which are nice residential areas, because they wanted the whites to get to their jobs, they had to work, and they didn't want the blacks to have a job, so they put a whole highway from West Orange through all the downtown. It used to stop down over right here, over West Orange, they added now and brought it all the way down, 280. They wanted the whites to get to their jobs without coming here. So they made a whole 78 highway that goes right through the heart of Newark, so they didn't have to stop in downtown. They had to go across. When you get off the train at Penn Station, there is a bridge that take you so you don't have to see the homeless people right there. They are connecting things and they don't touch the street. That's what they've done to my Newark. They disrupted it, they got nice houses, they got down there, split them up and built the highway.

So that you think was the trigger for the…

The riots were to say 'we don't need them, they are gonna need us', it just changed the whole face, because when the money went, a lot of things went. (*). After the riots Newark has never been the same. A lot of people, not just whites, but a lot of people just left because it was destroyed, and they got jobs in other places. It's sad because it was (*) jazz back in the day, oh my god, they had every kind of jazz. Newark was very very popular. In Newark there was something to do everyday. And you had transportation that ran all night long. Now what they do is they give you transportation to get to work and then back in the house. The buses are so scamp that you really can't do anything if you don't have a car. I used to love to go to NY, oh my god, I used to dance all night. You got off the train and there was a bus. 13 ran all night to Newark. 99 ran another all the way to Bloomfield, all the way to the (*) section. 13 ran all the way up to top of the Hill. You had transportation to absolutely everywhere. Now several buses were absolutely eliminated. They don't even exist. A lot of the buses. Because now they don't care how you, we get around.

They just assume you have a car, a garage, and a parking space.

Now they are populating, they are building everywhere so now they assume you have a car that you can fold up and put it in your bag or your pocket. (*). Elizabeth they still have a lot of public garages, they were really nice to their people. We had the streets, the department stores had their own garagesElizabeth used to have public municipal parking, 5 or 6 municipal parking. Newark is the biggest city in New Jersey and they've never had municipal parking. That has nothing to do with the riots or anything else, but we had the streets, then before the department stores had their own garages and you never had a problem... and the buses ran ever 5 minutes! So you took the bus whenever you need it! It was wonderful! It took me a long time to get a car. Before I didn't need one. I must've been 28. You didn't have a car, you didn't need it. It was like NY. In NY a car is a hindrance. And the buses just ran so you didn't need a car! Honestly. There was prejudice too. They had the twentieth century, those were the white cabs. When they really got desperate… public services used to be set a little different downtown. I can't even tell you the configuration but you got off the cab, near the buses or right there, when we used to come from NY what we used to do is each one of us would get the number of the cab just in case, nothing was bad then but the young girls out there, 1, 2 o'clock in the morning we just danced fever all night long, we sat out there with bare foot [laugh]. But it was different. They would take us when they were desperate. But to call them to pick you up, they had a green cab that belonged to the blacks...

But because they saw you and you were black or because of…

"Uhum. It is like in NY. You being in Manhattan, you black… you've never heard the joke 'if you're black, they don't pick you up'?"

No. We have that in Rio as well…

"Uhum, and they don't wanna go in certain communities. So when they see you they assume you're in that community. It's still the same old… whatever. In my mind is three strikes and you are out. I had my money to get a new cab, when you call when you say where they have to pick you up, they never come, because they don't wanna take you there.

NORTH AND SOUTH

So, were you the first member of your familyto attend college or other people…

56:05 – I don't know. My other ones, the ones that were in South Carolina, this guy (*), oh my god, but we don't see him that often though. He was the first. That is from my grandmother. And her sisters children, they all lived in the South, and they knew the struggle. Up here you get fooled. 'Oh we give you the world, the world is yours'. You don't know. Whites would tell you 'I don't like you', I can handle it, I don't mind that. But here 'oh you're the greatest thing' and they don't want this, you are held back because you think you're going somewhere and you find yourself in the same spot. While there, in the South, not the biggest stores, but they had everything, they had entrepreneurs. The whites didn't want us, so they made their own. They were independent and they were different there. They were realistic, they knew what life was like. If they [whites] want it or not want it, they [blacks] got their own".

So your family from South Carolina is from your dad's side?

No, no. My father came from the South, being Boston, but where I have no idea. My grandmother, North Carolina.

Your grandmother from your mom's side?

Uhum.

Ok. So have you been to North Carolina?

No, my daughter went there one time with the guy Ricky, the one I told you from the other side of my grandmother's side. She got down there, she went there a couple of times with my mom, but I've never been there.

Coming back now to the college, why did you decide to drop out of college?

Because I have the tendency not to finish anything. When I look back I say "why didn't I?" I'm just..

You constantly want to do something new…

No, it must be something else. Because about a month ago I was thinking hard about it. There must be a reason why I've never finished anything I started. I don't know. Because I took two years at Kane. Then it was college, it wasn't university, and I enjoyed it, and then I thought "do I want to go on?".

ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP

Are you comfortable of talking about your romantic relationships? Is it ok for you?

Mmmm… I don't know about people getting in that.

My question about it is just if they were from here, if the person that you were with was also from Newark.

I've dated different people, different cultures. I've dated Dominicans, (*). I'm not limited, no. And I've dated Asians. That's another thing I am not consistent about [laugh]

I was interested to know, if they were black and from Newark, how their experience was a black men.

59:46 – You see, I think it was very difficult because they had the jobs but, like I said, most of the jobs they would keep you for 90 days and then let you go and bring you back so you never became part of the union. That was with (*), the factories, but they went along so the money were coming in. It becomes very discouraging for men that wants to do something and you know within 30 days you don't have (*) to help your family. Back then, there were more blue collar than white collar and they paid very well. That's why when the big factories were closing down, when all the industry just crashed, some of the whites were crying! 'I never thought I'd be on welfare!' 'oh my god, I'm on food stamp!'. They were all blue collar people that were paid well

and they lived well and it wasn't because they went to college or any type of full background. They wanted blue collar work. But then all out of a sudden they all 'oh my god, you don't know what it's like!'. 'We don't? It's your turn'. And I didn't feel sorry for them!". See, I can't judge what you're doing with your money. You know what I mean? When I see people asking for money, I give it to them. "You don't know what they are going to do with your money!" "How do you know what they are going to do with it?". Once I give it to them, it's theirs and they do what they want. Maybe it will stop them from hurting somebody, you know. It's yours, once I give it to you. Whenever I feel I should, and certain people I say no. It's my inner spirit, you know what I mean? But once it's yours, it's yours.

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

How do you see yourself in comparison to the youth raised in Newark? The different generations, if you see it at all.

01:02:05 – Well, I think the younger people have more of an opportunity than I did, really, because everybody is trying to move forward, so they move with each other. (*) When before everybody was… all over the place. There is this Twin Brothers, I don't know if you read the books called The Pack, they grew up saying 'we are going to look up for each other" and one of them live in the complex right now, High Park Garden (*), they still go, blondie and different people, people in High Park Garden because we had college funds and different things and we have (*) and things that have money for the Pack, and he said if it wasn't for them (*). And they went back to the community. They came back and said "we are giving back". And it's a nice book.

What were the benefits of living in the times that you were..

01:03:32 - I think we knew how to play. Today the kids can't do anything. I'm so glad I was born when I was, if you ask me if I can go back what age would I be, maybe 40s [laugh], but maybe younger. It's a hard world. It really really is. Either you're black or white. People are just not nice to each other. We use to have friends, now a friend set you up to get robbed, and it's not ghetto thing, it's how the young people today are, just because they are jealous of you, or because you're popular or because whatever. And you think that's your friend!

I miss the times without social media.

Uhum. I don't know, before we were never on guard about a friend. A friend was a friend. And you don't need a million of them, you need only one or two. If you have too many, you know you're not loyal to anybody. I've learned that. "Oh I've got a new friend!", "no, you don't, you're not friend to any of them because you (*) yourself too soon. You're not friend of any one of them. (*). Because they will deplete you. Because each friend wants to talk. If it's a real friend then you're still getting rid off the other one. "Oh God, no more". (*). But make sure you have a friend for life. And like I said, I know what it is for the kids not to know what it is not to have a friend, not to go out to where you want to go, or somewhere that somebody can put something in your cup, you know, it's frightening. I liked my childhood.

Before we finish, is there anything you'd like to add that we haven't talked or if you want to go back in the conversation.

No, not really. I enjoy my daughter, I thank God for her. She is a blessing. Sometimes she pisses me off [laugh] Only because, it's a good thing, but she has certain health issues, but the fight to combat she stays moving moving and I am so concerned that something is gonna happen. But I am proud of her, she doesn't know because I am always on her "what are you doing?" but I am proud because I (*), as a mother, I worry about her [laugh], but I am very proud of her. And I know she is a child, but she gets mad at me because I don't wanna do anything [laugh]. "Mom, let me…" "naa" "there will be times, time will come, I don't wanna burry you out yet" [laugh]. But I'm thankful that I still sustain myself, take care of myself, I have my own place, my own car and I am able to, so I am thankful, I am 85 years old and I take care of me. Not (*) her, because she stands for me, but I (*) [laugh].

And she is here with you which is very nice.

Yeah, we're road buddies.

And only child, they understand each other.

Yes, yes! And she's the only child, she doesn't share the…

She doesn't wanna share the mother, I better [laugh]

To this day, she says "noo, noo, nobody is going to be with my mother". She's funny.

Thank you so much for participating, thank you a lot.

You're welcome, sweetheart.